

Interrogation of the Blind Man

The Word Became Flesh

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: John 9:1-12

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Have you ever questioned God before in your life? Have you ever found yourself saying something like, "You know, if I were God, I would have done it this way. If you haven't already come to that point in your life, I promise you will come to that point in your life where you will believe that somehow in your masterful wisdom and understanding, you know better than God.

I unfortunately have to admit before you that there have been times in my life, even with my limited scope of knowledge and understanding that sometimes I feel I know better than God." You see, when we go through difficult seasons, sometimes we don't see the reason for that season that we go through, sometimes for years. There are even experiences that you and I will go through that on this side of eternity, we will never understand exactly why we had to experience what we experienced.

You see, for my wife and I, this time showed up very early in our lives. We had been married for almost two years, and my wife and I decided that it was time to start a family. And of course, when I say my wife and I, I mean my wife. You see, I was okay at the time not having kids. I was enjoying young, married life, and I had a new job and just the adventure of living. My wife, on the other hand, wanted nothing more in this world than to be a mom.

So after about 8 to 10 months of trying to get pregnant and not getting pregnant, Carolyn told me that we should go get checked out. Now, I didn't know what this meant, but it didn't sound fun. And so I was a little skeptical, and I said, "Are you sure? It's only been 8 to 10 months. You know It's okay. It's not a big deal." But once again, a woman's intuition proved to be correct. For the next six years, my wife and I would struggle with what the doctors would call unexplained infertility. Now, again, for me, it was not that big of a deal.

I was enjoying life. I enjoyed the time that we were spending together. But for my wife, Carolyn, it was often debilitating. And so for the next few years, we would ask this question, "Why? Why are we going through this? Why are we experiencing this? Why is this happening to us?" And so as the spiritual leader, I was the youth pastor at the time. I thought I should be able to answer this question for my wife. I am going to explain why this is happening to us.

Now, of course, we wanted something or someone to blame, but I tried to reassure her, "You know what? We just live in a fallen world and that because of sin, stuff like this just happens." Now, this made me feel better, but for her, it did not. That would be a trend as we continue, right, in marriage. You see, I thought about that answer, this idea that sometimes we just live in a fallen world, and it just is what it is, and we have to experience it.

As time would go on, by making that statement, I realized I was incorrect because by saying that, I was taking away the sovereignty of God, by just believing, "Eh, it just happens." And as difficult as it was for me to accept and as difficult as it was for my wife to accept, we had to change the answer to the why question. My answer had to become because God wants it that way.

Now, if you struggle with that answer, I'm glad because it makes you human. We don't deal with that very well. Why would God want us to struggle? Why would He want us to go through pain? Is it true that the difficult season I'm going through right now, maybe whatever you're experiencing, that God is actually the one behind that happening, as hard as it is to believe or to want that to be true, I believe that our story that we're going to look at today is going to confirm that truth, that God is in charge.

So if you have your Bibles, I encourage you to open up with me to John chapter 9 verse 1. We're continuing in our series that we've been calling the Word became flesh as we work our way through the gospel of John. In John chapter 9, he is going to pivot quite a bit from where we left off last week in John chapter 8. At the end of John chapter 8, Jesus was having a conversation with those who believed him, and the conversation got a little tense to the point that they were trying to stone him, and John tells us that he just slipped away.

We don't know how that happens, but he slipped away. And so now when we get into John 9:1, we're certainly at another day, maybe even another month. We're down the road from that taking place. And today, we're actually only going to make it a third of the way through John chapter 9. We're going to spend three weeks in John chapter 9 because I love this story and there is so much that we can learn from it. So if you haven't already, open to John chapter 9 verse 1 and we're going to pray and then we will jump in.

Heavenly Father, there are certainly people in this room. There are people watching online, people listening on the radio right now at this moment that are experiencing a difficult season in life. And like all of us, they have asked the question, "Why?" They've asked why. Lord, I pray that in the next few moments that you would provide encouragement, that you would provide peace, that you would provide comfort.

But even more important than all of those things, I pray that you would draw us close to you, that our trust and our faith in you would grow, even in our difficult seasons. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. John chapter 9:1, we read, "As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth." Now, I'm going to stop after every verse because as I read these stories, I try to reconstruct them in our minds and in my mind.

And so I imagine Jesus and disciples walking along, and they come across this man, and I have to ask the question, how did they know that he was blind from birth and not just blind from an accident or something else? We don't have the answer to that question, but maybe there was some kind of physical difference in his face that you could tell this was something that had happened from birth. It wasn't just an accident. Or maybe we know that he was blind from birth because John knew that as the story would go on, and so he just gives us that information ahead of time.

Regardless of whether they can physically see it or they just find that out, we know that it isn't a coincidence that this man is born blind. We also know that it's not just by chance that Jesus and His disciples happen to run into this blind man. We will be reminded as we continue in this story that nothing happens by chance, that God is orchestrating His plan. This is a divine meeting that was scheduled even before this blind man was born.

From the beginning of time, this was to take place in John chapter 9. Let's go on to verse 2. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Now, doesn't this seem like a strange question to ask? As I was picturing this in my mind, I imagine that they're close enough to each other and the blind man standing there going, "You know, I'm blind, but I'm not deaf." you know Like, "What do you mean I sinned or my parents sinned? Why do you even think that this is my fault, that I got myself in this situation?" So as I read this, I wonder, is this an assumption that most Jews held at the time? And if so, if this was an assumption that all of our difficulties or struggles were because of our sin, is there any truth to that assumption that all of our struggles are because of our sin? Can we experience physical sickness due to our sin?

Well, the answer to that question is yes, at least to a certain extent. You see, you go back to the book of Genesis and you understand that when God created mankind, it was perfect. There was no pain, no death, no suffering, none of that in the world. And so obviously, our sin has brought that into creation. And so in some ways, at least to, again, a small extent, death and suffering and pain is because of sin.

Therefore, it's not implausible to blame some of our suffering on our sin or the sins of others. But we have to use caution when we do that. We may want to look for someone else or something else to blame, like my wife and I tried with our infertility, but it's not a good practice. And Jesus is going to share why, because not all of our difficult seasons can be blamed on sin. Look at this. Verse 3.

Jesus's answer, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus. "But this happened, him being born blind, so that the works of God might be displayed in Him." God is in control of every situation, even those which seem bad from our perspective. Some of our pain and difficulty can be for the purpose of God receiving glory.

Some of our pain is not because of our sin or somebody else's sin. Some of our pain could possibly be so that God could receive glory. Now, I want you to put yourself in the shoes of this blind man. I do believe he is standing here, hearing this conversation taking place, and now you discover your whole life you have been blind for the main reason, the purpose is so that your story could be recorded in John chapter 9. Would that make you feel any better?

I don't know that it would make me feel any better in that moment. Would it be easier to go through that? Think about your own life, whatever you're experiencing now. Would it be easier for you to go through what you are going through now if you knew the sole purpose was to bring glory to God? What if there was no one to blame? What if it wasn't anybody's fault? What if it wasn't just random or bad luck? You see, we all want to experience a miracle, but no one wants to be the person in need of one.

I've always said, "I want to experience a miracle. God, it would be awesome if you could help me experience a miracle." And then I had to realize, "Well, that means that I need a miracle." I don't know that I want that. Let's go on to verse 4.

"As long as it is day," Jesus said, "We must do the works of Him who sent me. For night is coming when no one can work." This is an interesting statement.

Fortunately for us, I mean, we've just wrapped up John chapter 8, and so we know that Jesus has said, "I am the light of the world," understanding that it's day we have to do the works of Him who sent Jesus. But he says a day is approaching. There is a time that is coming where night will be here. So what is this night that Jesus refers to? Is this a time when miracles can't take place because maybe the power of the Spirit is taken away from us as human beings, and so we don't see miracles happen? Was he just referring to the time after he was resurrected, but the Holy Spirit isn't given yet at the Day of Pentecost. And so there's this time of night when Jesus is with the Father, but the Spirit hasn't been given yet?

Or was he referring to a time in the future as some theologians believe when the Spirit and all believers will be taken from this planet? Is that the night that he is referring to? I honestly don't know the answer. It could be one of those three or it could be none of those three, but the night definitely means the presence of Jesus is gone. We go on to verse 5.

"While I am in the world," he says again, "I am the light of the world." Do you recognize that the only thing keeping us from darkness is the Spirit of Jesus Christ? The only thing keeping us from darkness is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. You and I cannot fathom a world that is absent of the goodness of God. I hear all the time people saying, "Oh, our world is going so far away from God and it's so awful.

All of these bad things are happening and our country is going out of control. You and I cannot comprehend what our world would look like without God." We have no idea what God is holding back every moment of every day by His presence. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." Verse 6, "After saying this, Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes." The first question I have is why?

Really? Why? There's so many other ways that Jesus could have healed this man. We've read about it in Scripture. We know that he could just touch it. We know that there's all these ways. Why did he put mud on this man's eyes?

Sometimes I like to joke with the teenagers and I say, "You know what? There's even miraculous power in the spit of Jesus." But was that the reason so that we would know that? Some have heard or even used the phrase, "You know what? Just rub some dirt on it." Hey, maybe that works, right?

Because that's what Jesus is doing here. He's going to rub some mud into it, but maybe there's some truth that we should learn here. You see, one of the possible reasons and conclusions that theologians have come to as to why Jesus decided to spit in the mud, make mud, put it on his face. We see in the next verse. So let's look at that next verse, verse 7. "Go," Jesus told him, "and wash in the pool of Siloam." This word means scent. So the man went and washed, and he came home seeing.

We need to recognize here in verse 7, that the healing didn't occur until the man born blind acted out of obedience and faith to the command of Jesus. It wasn't the putting on of the mud that healed him. He didn't open his eyes after that and see. No, there had to be an act of obedience, an act of faith saying, "Yes, I am willing." And so he had to go and wash the mud off. And then he could see. The blind man had a role to play in his healing.

He could have complained. He could have asked Jesus, "What in the world are you doing? Why are you doing this? Imagine being the blind man and you can hear everything." And there's this weird conversation going on between Jesus and His disciples, and they're trying to blame you, that you are somehow blind because of your sin or your parents' sin or whatever else, and you're standing there and then all of a sudden you hear like, "What's going on?" And then, again, his sense of hearing had to be expanded because he was blind.

All of a sudden, you hear him rustling in the dirt, and he's making mud, and you're thinking, "Okay, where's this going?" And then you feel it on your eyes. I mean, I have to be honest with you, I'd have been a little grossed out. I would have been thinking, "What is this guy doing?" But this man was willing. I mean, we don't hear of any debate or anything. He didn't care what others thought or what they might say. And when I read this story in John chapter 9, it took me back to a story in 2 Kings about a man named Naaman.

Naaman was a general in a foreign army, and Naaman had leprosy. And he had heard about this man in Israel at the time who could somehow heal physical ailments. And so he decided to make the trip with some of his servants to Israel because he wanted to meet with this man, Elisha. But before he gets to Elisha, Elisha knows that he is coming and sends some of his servants and says, "I want you to tell Naoman to go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River." And Naoman's angry.

He's upset. "Here, I've made this trip. I thought I would at least get to go see Elisha, and he would touch me and heal me. Why does he want me to go and wash in the Jordan? We have way better rivers in the country where I came from." Don't we often have that same response when Jesus kind of gives us a command to do something and we're like, "Well, I

don't think that sounds like the best plan. Let's rework it a little bit." Fortunately for Naaman and that story in 2 Kings, his servants say, "What do you have to lose?" you know This man has said to go do it, go do it. And so Naaman says, "Fine, I'll go do it." And so he goes down to the river and he washes seven times, and he comes out, and his skin is like the skin of a baby. But there's a huge difference in the level of faith between this blind man in John chapter 9 and Naaman back in 2 Kings. There's some questions I have as I think about this story. We know that the blind man ended up going to the pool and washing his eyes, but I asked the question, did Jesus go with him? Were the disciples there when he was healed because we don't know that by reading the text? Was there anybody else there that was watching this man? Did something physically transform in this man when he washed his eyes, and so all of a sudden, his eyes formed or something like that? Was there anybody there to celebrate with him when he could see for the first time in his life? Could you imagine trying to make sense of the world? Or was this simply a personal journey of faith for the blind man?

You see, sometimes God gives us direction, but he simply wants us to respond with obedience and trust, and sometimes that journey is done alone. Here, we go on in verse 8. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging, this blind man asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" This is why I asked the question, "Did something physically happen with his face?" It's why at the beginning of the story, I wonder, they say, "Well, they knew he was born blind.

Was there something about him that then when he was healed, there was a physical change that took place because even his neighbors who had known him since a child didn't fully recognize him? Is this the same guy? Is that so-and-so that we've known since a baby?" And if it was the same man, I love the fact that these people do recognize him. They ask him, "Is this for sure you?" And this guy wasn't faking that he was blind.

If you're like me and you watch some of the television shows, which I don't watch very often, so don't get concerned, you know, where there's all the healings taking place and stuff like that. I sometimes watch those shows, and I'll just be honest with you, if I see a guy go up there in a wheelchair and somebody touches, and then he stands up and walks away, my first thought is, "Yeah, he was just faking." That's my first thought. Maybe I don't have as much faith as you. That couldn't be said of this guy. These people knew him before. They knew him his entire life. If this is the same guy, he was blind.

He used to beg. What has happened? And so in verse 9, some claimed that he was that man, but others said, "No, he just looks like him. But he himself insisted, "I am the man." This is the first testimony of the blind man where he could have just excused it and gone off and done whatever he wanted, but he was going to use this as an opportunity to share his testimony. He said, "Yes, it's me." So in verse 10, of course, they asked him, "Well, how then were your eyes opened if you are the same man?

If it truly is you, what happened? How can you see now?" This is possibly the largest open door you'll ever be given to share your faith. They asked him the question, "You are changed. You are different. Something happened. What happened?" Think about your own life. Maybe you're going through a difficult season right now. It might even be filled with depression and anxiety. It might be a health issue, a financial issue, a relational issue.

When we go through those seasons, our countenance changes in our face. People can tell something's just not right. And it's hard to change that. It's hard to get over that. But if you're like me and you have stories that you can look back in the rearview mirror and see how God brought you through that, and you get to the other side, your face changes again. People can see the glory of God on your face, and people will often come up to you and say, "Man, something looks different about you.

What happened? You're changed. There is no greater opportunity that God has given you to share your faith than in that moment." So the man answers here in verse 11, he replied, "The man they called Jesus made some mud, and he put it on my eyes. Then he told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed. And then when I did, when I opened my eyes, I could see. He doesn't make up some elaborate story. He doesn't embellish the facts.

As far as we know, this is the first time that he is sharing his testimony of what God has done, but I do find it a little funny that he left out the part of how the mud was made, right? Maybe even he thought, "That's just a little too weird. I'm not going to share that part of the story." But he made some mud and he put it in my eyes and I washed. And now I can see. We get to verse 12. "Where is this man?" They asked him. "I don't know," he said. Remember, I wondered if Jesus was there with him or if anybody was with him?

For me, this kind of confirms the fact that, no, he was sent to go do this on his own. He doesn't even know where Jesus is at this point. I'm not surprised that they want to meet Jesus. I'm sure they had a few questions to ask Him, and I would imagine they had some ailments that they might like healed too. They might be saying, "You know what? My arm

kind of hurts. Maybe he could rub some dirt on it. Maybe he could heal me." This blind man was grateful for the gift. Let's get real practical now.

Maybe you're here today, or maybe you're watching, or you're listening, and you feel like the blind man before he was healed. You're experiencing something in life that doesn't make sense to you. It's not what you would have chosen. If you were God, it wouldn't be working out this way. Maybe you've even used the words that I have used and you think to yourself, "This is just not fair what I'm experiencing." Maybe you've questioned God multiple times now to say, "What are you doing?" Maybe you're in that season right now, like my wife and I were going through that infertility for six years.

First, can I just tell you it's okay? It's okay. I can't tell you why you're going through what you're going through, but I can sympathize with you. Others can as well, even though our situations are all different, we all know what that painful season feels like, and it's hard, and we understand. I can also reassure you that God is in control and he's working. Although I can't give you the answer why, I do have faith and trust that God is in control.

I don't know why you're experiencing what you're experiencing. It might be so that God can receive glory, but you know what else is? We'll next week continue in John chapter 9. Another reason you might be experiencing what you're experiencing right now is because God is trying to call you to him. This blind man didn't know who Jesus was, and he has this encounter, and God uses this experience to draw him to Jesus.

Maybe you are going through what you're going through because God had to use a situation like this before you would humble yourself before Him. The Scripture is clear that if we repent of our sins, if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. Maybe your difficult season is to break you down enough to where you will crawl before Jesus and say, "I need you." Maybe your story is different.

Maybe you're here this morning or watching online or listening, and you're like the blind man after he was healed. You've gone through a difficult season, but you can look in the rearview mirror, and life is just smooth sailing right now. Can I tell you what your responsibility is? Your responsibility is to be faithful and to share the good news. Don't be shy about sharing what God has done. Don't be ashamed. Instead, be bold. As we continue the story next week, you are going to find that this man who was born blind has no fear of sharing his story with whoever will listen.

And he doesn't care what their response is going to be. And we will come to one of my favorite verses in all of Scripture when the blind man stands before the Pharisees and they're interrogating him and questioning him and how did this happen and what do you believe? And he simply looks at him and he says, "Listen, whether this man was a sinner or not, I don't know. What I do know is I was blind, but now I see." That is our testimony. I may not be able to answer every question.

I don't know why you're going through, but I was lost. Now I'm found. God has healed me. Let me close in prayer. Heavenly Father, you know what is going on in everybody's hearts and minds. I pray for Your Spirit to be poured out among us.

And if there are those that can look in the rearview mirror and see your faithfulness in their life, the altars are always open for them to come. It doesn't have to be to receive prayer. It could be to give praise. Thank you, God. Thank you. Maybe there are others here, though, that are in the midst of that difficult season. They're the blind man right now wondering why. This isn't fair. Maybe they just want somebody to pray with them just to help them take that next step, whatever that is.

There'll be people here that want to pray with them. They'll be upfront. Give them the courage to step forward and just say, "You know what? I just want someone to pray with me." God, our desires that You would receive the glory. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.